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W A R  
INCONSISTENT WITH THE  
DOCTRINE AND EXAMPLE  
OF  
J E S U S C H R I S T.

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IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

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RECOMMENDED TO THE PERUSAL  
OF THE  
PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY.

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“ Follow peace with all men.”  
“ Forgive your enemies, do good to them that hate you.”  
“ My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of  
this world, then would my servants fight.” NEW TEST.

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By I. SCOTT. *K*

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W A R

INCONSISTENT WITH THE

DOCTRINE AND EXAMPLE

OF

JESUS CHRIST

BY A LECTURE



LECTURE

PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY

THE DOCTRINE AND EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST  
AS SET FORTH IN THE GOSPELS  
AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES  
AND THE EPISTLES OF THE APOSTLES  
AND THE WRITINGS OF THE FATHERS  
AND THE COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH  
AND THE DOCTRINE AND EXAMPLE OF THE  
SAINTS AND MARTYRS  
AND THE DOCTRINE AND EXAMPLE OF THE  
ANGELS AND ARCHANGELS  
AND THE DOCTRINE AND EXAMPLE OF THE  
SPIRITS OF THE DEAD  
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WAR  
INIMICAL  
TO  
CHRISTIANITY.

DEAR SIR,

WHEN I saw you lately, you may remember a part of our conversation turned on war—and perhaps you may think me singular in some of my sentiments, as controverting the received opinion of men in general. I have therefore devoted an hour or two to state to you further my particulars views on this subject.

It is really astonishing with how much composure mankind, and some acknowledged to be among the best living, admit the propriety of war in any sense; and while they in general terms deplore the misery of it, allow its necessity in some shape or other; and for the most part, in that of defence; and under this mask the great adversary of men has forced his impositions on them, while they seem not to think of discussing the subject as to the propriety of it in any

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shape whatever, yet, at the same time, profess to act on christian principles. For my own part, I cannot help wishing to see it become a subject of universal discussion, till the renunciation of the tenet shall spread itself as wide as the misery of it has hitherto done.

War, however dreadful in its progress, and awful in its consequences, is always pretended to be built on necessity; and time would be lost in endeavouring to prove what scarce any one will deny; that is, the unlawfulness of offensive wars, even on moral, much less on christian, principles; the most thorough-paced politician, to the existence of whose power and dominion war is necessary, will always produce acts of aggression on the part of his adversaries, and justify his measures as defensive, and on the ground of necessity: how liable such reasoning is to objection from every thinking person, will be evident, when it is considered, that with this plea the most ambitious and arbitrary tyrants have set the engine going; and if war is convenient, and promises a partial gain, a plea in justification will always be too readily found, although one certain consequence of war, is a general loss—the gain only accruing to an inconsiderable number of individuals; and if the generality of princes and great men were honest enough to let mankind know their own real sentiments, the systems of war would soon come to nothing. From some of the late king of Prussia's letters to Voltaire, it will be apparent what thoughts

even princes entertain of it. But, alas! when interest and duty come into competition, how frequently does the latter give place to the former?

In these sentiments then, I have not merely to oppose men who oppose all the order of society, by committing depredation and offence universally; but those who interlard the system of bloodshed with the profession of christianity.

And here it is necessary to observe, that all war, even admitting an aggression, goes on the principle of rendering evil for evil; and how difficult is it, even politically, to decide where the aggression begins, or how one nation possesses a right to call in question what to another nation seems an equal right of theirs?—and yet questions of this kind frequently form a ground of the most bloody, destructive, and unnatural wars. And even admitting the case to be clearly made out, how often does the retaliation of the injured party exceed the offence, and in that case, in a moral point of view, they certainly change ground, and the original aggressors become the injured party. Many instances of this kind might be stated, but to name one; America, in her late contest with Great Britain, is a case in point,—America had chartered rights, in which she supposed she was oppressed by the parent state—she remonstrated and petitioned—The parent state resisted, and refused to comply—America resisted again.—Great Britain exercised coercion, and sent over an army—America raised a counter army to defend

their rights, and was finally successful; and yet how often in that contest did the parties change ground, and act offensively as well as defensively?—and who can state precisely where the act of aggression began, or where retaliation ought to have ceased. Indeed the subject seems involved in all this intricacy and these evil consequences, as if, by a special intervention of Providence, the rash hand of man should be restrained from going to the extreme bounds of right, lest it should overleap those bounds, and trespass on the territory of wrong. In some cases the right will seem more clear, and, perhaps, on certain principles, may be made out, yet very difficult it is; but as the question I make is, not whether morality, but whether christianity allows it, I think myself bound no further than the latter part of the question requires. I therefore avow the following proposition as a sentiment closely connected, and one with the nature of true christianity, and as a sentiment which will finally prevail :

*That war, in every shape, is incompatible with the nature of christianity; and that no persons professing that religion, and under the full and proper influence of the temper and mind of Christ, can adopt, pursue, or plead for it.*

My proof is very short and very plain, and will take up much less time, than answering the objections which the sophistry of men have invented to obscure the subject.

For proof then, I have to offer the plain, direct,

and unequivocal commands of Christ and his apostles; and, first, I refer to that admirable code of christian doctrine and morality delivered by Christ on the Mount, Matth. ch. 5. ver. 38. and 39. "Ye have heard, it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Here then Christ inculcates on all christians the principles of non-resistance, and forbids every kind of retaliation. And I beg leave to produce this text as a full answer to all those persons who state the example of the Jewish polity, or of Jewish characters, as an argument to christians for war, for retaliation, and for revenge. If they will be at the trouble of looking at the text, they will observe the Jewish dispensation is changed, and that by the Legislator himself—and he has confirmed the doctrine by his own example. And after so pointed and absolute a removing the old, to make way for the new, the christian dispensation, a dispensation of life and peace, how any man can urge the justification of war, and, at the same time, profess to act on christian principles, is, I confess, to me a mystery far, very far, beyond my penetration.

In the same chapter, and about the 44th verse, the Saviour goes on not only to urge christians to the negative virtue of forbearance, but to the positive duty of love, and loving their enemies, and to return only every possible good in their power for

every possible injury they could receive; and it is urged on this principle, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;" and then makes the excellency of his doctrines to consist in their superior effects, and their tendency to make his disciples *more* than other men. See the 46, 47, and 48 verses.

I know these doctrines are admitted by many, when applied only to individuals, or to christians in their individual capacity, but are denied when applied to professing christian states or political bodies; but by what authority is the sense restrained or applied in this particular way?—I conceive not by the authority of Christ, and I know of no other authority competent to the task. Nay, it is said expressly, that no scripture is of private (mere private) interpretation: and it may fairly be inferred, that if individuals are bound to act up to certain principles, if they profess themselves christian, societies, under the same profession, are subject to the same rules, and if they transgress, will have to answer the trespass as transgressors of the command of Christ. The too-common and well-known distinction between political and moral right; or, in other words, between political expedience and christian duty, is a distinction dangerous in the extreme, not founded in truth, and of a most pernicious tendency to morality in general: political bargains are often

made for convenience, and for convenience are often broken, on this principle; but our judgments must surely be grossly imposed upon, before we can admit such sentiments, and it behoves good men to examine the dangerous tendency of lessening the moral obligation of scripture precepts, or making the positive commands of Christ equivocal, merely to support an hypothesis which has nothing but custom to stamp its authenticity, and that, not of the purer, but the debased and most corrupt ages of christianity.

Again, another precept of the christian religion is, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him—if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Rom. 12. v. 20. If it is objected, that the concluding part of this expression conveys the highest and most effectual idea of retaliation. They who suppose so, certainly mistake the sense, which will be quite plain, if we consult the subsequent verse: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Now, I would ask, admitting this practice of doing good in return for evil, how can the principle of war between christian states be supported for a moment?—It is only in the absence of every christian doctrine, and every humane feeling, that such a supposition can be admitted.

Once more, we are commanded, as christians, to render, not evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrarywise blessing, (1 Pet. 3. and 9.) and this

conduct is urged from a consideration of what we ourselves are called to partake, namely, a blessing; and if we profess to love our neighbour as ourselves, even on that principle we should seek the welfare of all the human race, who are our brethren by nature, and claim all that love; not indulging the unchristian distinctions of the times against men of a different language, colour, or clime.

It is quite unnecessary to make any comment further, or to quote a multitude of other passages: let these scriptures be read, give them all their scope, and the voice of impartiality and sound sense, as well as the voice of religion, of piety, of humanity, all unite to declare how forced a sense must be supplied to make them breathe any thing else but love and peace, good-will and harmony to the sons of men: indeed, if they breathe not these, they breathe nothing. I shall forbear further proof on behalf of my proposition, for whoever remains undecided with the evidence already produced, will not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

From hence I infer then, that christians are not free to fight; and if the states, under which they live, require it of them, they ought to yield to suffer for refusing to bear arms, rather than to sin against the command of Christ in doing it, though men of courage—and none possess courage in the degree which good men do, yet their courage cannot, on the christian principle, be evinced as soldiers, but rather as martyrs; and although, from

what has gone before, it is easy to see my sentiments involve those of non-resistance, yet I am for obedience no further than a man can justify his conscience in the sight of God in obeying; further than that no power on earth can be just in exacting it—further than that no true follower of the Saviour can be just in yielding it: if governments dispose even of the civil rights and privileges of its subjects, and barter them away, a christian *ought* not, he is not justified in contending for them per force—it is forbidden by Christ: in such cases, submission is enjoined to civil laws, to imposts, taxes, and customs; but when governments interfere with the religious rights of subjects, and dare to bind the consciences of men, then christians are called to endure any sufferings rather than by submission to the laws of men violate their higher and supreme obligations to the eternal God: but in this, it is to be observed, the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, the kingdom of Christ is not to be promoted by his disciples spreading carnage, bloodshed, and confusion, far and wide; but by an invincible adherence to his doctrines and example, and a resistance even unto blood, striving against sin, that so their enemies may be persuaded, by their constancy, of the power and excellence of those principles which would rather submit to the greatest sufferings than commit the least evil.

But if war, either foreign or civil, was a justifi-

able measure, we should find a justification of it from some examples left on record in the Bible for our direction in this important case; and therefore the Jewish polity which, in its outset and progress, was supported by wars of God's own command, is argued to confirm it.

In reply to this, I refer to what has been already stated as to Christ having abolished the Jewish dispensation. These commands of God applied only to the Jews, theirs was a government of this world; the government of Christ is not so; that was a temporal constitution; the constitution of Christ's government is spiritual. Hence, says he, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, *then would my servants fight.*" John xviii. 36. Nor does the examples of Abraham, David, and other good men, under that dispensation, supply better argument; some things were admitted to them, totally inconsistent with christian economy—for instance, polygamy and the doctrine of divorces, which the Saviour tells us were only suffered in those times of ignorance, in condescension to their comparatively small degree of light, the infirmities of men, or the hardness of their hearts. But perhaps this is granting too much, and a sufficient reason might be assigned without so much apology.

Where there is no law there is no transgression—but there was no law to forbid it under the Old

Testament, therefore it was lawful ; but we have a law to forbid it, and therefore to us it is unlawful.

If, then, we cannot find a ground for this argument to stand on among the Jews, or in the examples of its greatest champions, let us go to Christ—but here we shall surely fail, our enemies themselves being judges; nothing of resistance—nothing of retaliation or revenge—of force opposed to force in Jesus Christ—all was submission, humility, and love. But, say some, it was so; but he assumed this character that he might fulfil the law for our sakes: he suffered all this for us, and it behoved him to do it in the character of mediator which he sustained. We know, “ he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers, he was dumb and opened not his mouth.” But we are not to be so vain as to conceive every part of Christ’s character imitable by us; true, but if he assumed that character, that he might fulfil the law for us, it proves that we had been transgressors of that law. Now let me ask, shall we, because he did thus, continue transgressors, and reward his love by continued acts of rebellion? If your religion teaches you this, I cease to wonder that you pursue war, or any other evil practices: and know, O vain man! that however readily we admit what Jesus Christ did as mediator, if we exclude his example, we have neither part nor lot in his salvation; and if we imitate not the latter, we possess no proof of participating the former: but one scripture shall

close this paragraph. "He suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps; who knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judges righteously." (1 Pet. ch. 2. v. 21-22, 23.) Here his mediation and example are united, and what God has joined let no man put asunder.

I cannot with equal pleasure refer to the character of the professing christian monarchs, emperors, and kings of the earth: before I can get an example from any of these, which would support and justify the system of war, I see them involved so far in the temper, the spirit, the views, and politics of this world as to have forgone the temper, mind, and spirit of Christ; and although much is said of the establishment of christianity by human laws, yet it is my *humble* belief, that true christianity owes not its support to any such aids, but is superior to every such thing as the policy, the institutions, or laws of men. They may derive much advantage from it, if truth is admitted to their councils, but not it from them. This subject would be too copious to dilate upon; however, as the Emperor Constantine is the great champion of these human defenders, he shall pass in review, and I shall content myself with noticing the most striking particulars which have led many to ascribe great things to him in this way.

The story is generally exhibited thus: "That  
" Constantine observing the fatal miscarriages of

“ the emperors, his predecessors, who had reposed  
 “ confidence in the assistance of a multitude of  
 “ gods; but, notwithstanding their zeal, their wars  
 “ had been generally unprosperous, and their ends  
 “ unfortunate and untimely. On the other hand,  
 “ his father, who acknowledged one only Supreme  
 “ God and Governor of the World, had been gene-  
 “ rally prosperous; this determined him to chuse  
 “ this God, to whom he prayed to have him made  
 “ known to himself, and that he would aid him in  
 “ his then intended warlike expedition. He ac-  
 “ cordingly received a remarkable answer to his  
 “ prayer, and saw a vision in the heavens—a pillar  
 “ of light in the fashion of a cross, with a Greek in-  
 “ scription, *In this overcome*. This was at first  
 “ matter of surprize and doubt; but, in the night  
 “ following, the Saviour appeared to him in a vi-  
 “ sion, with the cross in his hand, which he had  
 “ shewed him the day before, commanding him to  
 “ make a royal standard like it, and cause it to be  
 “ carried before him in his wars, as a token or en-  
 “ sign both of victory and safety.”

This was commission enough to an ambitious man,  
 already near the zenith of power, and aiming at the  
 pinnacle of grandeur, honour, and success. This,  
 like other accidental events, or fictitious stories,  
 wrought on the minds of his soldiers; and they  
 wanted but to be led on to obtain success; fired with  
 the fury of men in a crusade, they were irresistible.  
 The emperor at the same time professing christian-

ity, it became the prevailing religion of the times : but, it is to be feared, less from conviction than from the fashion or custom ; and, where it was not professed, force often supplied the place of conviction or better argument ; and in the same way, often since, nations have been baptized with the dagger at their throats, to increase its reputed converts.

Two or three short remarks on this extraordinary anecdote will be needful. // And first, is it compatible with the general tenor of scripture to admit, or even suppose, that after Christ had finished his work of peace and goodwill to men ; and having told his followers, that his kingdom was not of this world ; that within three hundred years after, he should appear, and even descend from heaven, to encourage the sanguinary operations of the sword ; and having suffered his gospel to rise and prosper by persecutions, by trials, by afflictions ; and having, in the foregoing centuries, taught his disciples the doctrines of humility, submission, obedience, and self-denial, he should now turn the tables on his enemies, and authorize men, who are christian in little else than the name, to go forth and slaughter their opposers ? This appears so gross a contradiction of the principles of scripture, and of the spirit of Christ, that my understanding, poor as it is, revolts at it, and cannot admit it in any degree.

In the next place, if we review the state of christianity itself at that period, many errors had crept

into the church, lax in its discipline, divided in its doctrines and opinions, error had made great progress, and even in some of the men who stand foremost among the advocates of Christ in that day, we meet with many ridiculous, inconsistent, and immoral facts; indeed the purity of the gospel was far corrupted, and this was that baneful hour when religion was first made the engine of state policy, and then first the church, or, at least, men professing to be members of it, were hired for a standing army; and I cannot help thinking, that this story of Constantine is a mere figment, invented to serve a particular turn, and which, from the fatal credit it has gained, has imposed on millions who bear the christian name.

If history and facts were to be adduced, there might be many instances brought forward where christians, impelled by a true spirit, have, in the total renunciation of war, been defended from their enemies, and preserved an honour to their profession. The Quakers, at this day, are living witnesses of the truth of this remark, and the Moravians maintain the same principle.

The submission of acknowledged good men to the practice of war, will, on investigation, be found equally nugatory to the support of the error\*. I

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\* The coalition between good men and bad men in the progress of war, is like that of Ahab and Jehosaphat, and the issue is likely to be similar—death to the one, and danger and shame to the other.

admit good men have defended the principle, but they did it as patriots, not as christians—as lovers of their country, but not as the followers of Christ. Others have gone into the practice, and yet seemed to carry the habits of piety about them; but it altogether appears to me as a defect and imperfection in that which, on the whole, might be allowed to be good, and yet but partially so; for how does it sink our ideas of exalted piety, and the spirit and mind of Christ, residing in a bosom which the next hour is to arise and scatter death and destruction all around! Peter was a good man, but although his habits were good, he sometimes failed in the exercise—he, in the spirit of retaliation and human affection towards his master, drew his sword, and cut off an enemy's ear; and did he obtain a plaudit?—No: “Put up thy sword,” says the meek Saviour, “for *all* they that take the sword shall perish by the sword:” See also Revelations, ch. 13, v. 9 and 10. “If any man have an ear to hear, let him hear: He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword.” And, by consulting the connection of the passage, it will appear that these warriors were not the worshippers of the *Lamb*, but of the *Beast*. And how well these predictions have been verified, let matter of fact declare.

On the whole, the providence of God seems to have permitted this evil, and borne with the manners of men, and especially of some who are ac-

knowledge good in the main, in the same way in which he allowed polygamy and divorces under the Old Testament, because of the hardness of men's hearts, and of the darkness of those times; but that the usage of such practices should be followed on this account, is as unreasonable as that the duplicity of Jacob, or faults of David, should form an apology for our imitation of their crimes.

I have sometimes given scope to my mind, and supposed myself engaged in war, and that in the defence of the best cause for which the sword was ever drawn—civil liberty, and the vindication of the oppressed from the hand of tyranny; and have, for the moment, for argument sake, admitted it as lawful; I have anticipated the sound of the trumpet in leading on to the charge, and then have plunged amidst the roaring of cannon, or the clangor of arms into the heat of action—either leading on or led, my bosom swelled with the importance of the cause, my heart beat high, I looked on death with defiance, and on my foes with disdain, determining to conquer or perish in the attempt: all fresh from this bloody scene, I have brought my temper, my bosom, my heart, to the great exemplar of christian perfection, and shame has covered me.—What trait of the mind of Christ did I follow when I defied death?—did I do it as a christian?—Ah, no! Could my hope in endless glory be certain during the eventful and bloody scene! did the nature of the christian reli-

gion, or the pattern of the holy Jesus, inspire me with disdain for my enemies, while piercing their vitals, and spilling their souls into the shades of destruction\*?—No—he commanded me to love my enemies, but I have been destroying them altogether; he has enjoined submission and suffering; but I have fought for superiority, victory, and conquest. On the whole, let that man stand forth, if earth can produce such an one, who can say he goes into action, and engages in the heat of war, in that spirit which he is conscious will be approved and owned by the Judge of all the earth, when all our subtuges and self-impositions must be renounced? and if such an one should arise, and declare it a fact that he could, for my own part, I should infer a deceived heart had turned him aside. But if it be admitted that the temper of mind necessary for the action of

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\* “Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge who eat up my people as they eat bread, &c.” Psalm 14. v. 4. This is an affecting enquiry; and is it of no moment, christians, that thousands and hundreds of thousands of your fellow men have their souls immaturely dislodged, and are sent down to the chambers of death, with a lie in their right hand? I would not be censorious or uncharitable, but are not the morals of soldiers and sailors (with a very few exceptions) debauched to a proverb? And (hear, hear) are not their *crimes winked at, allowed, and even indulged*, in the times of respite, as a brutal reward for their services? Proof is easy—ask the inhabitants of a sea-port town, or garrison, after a campaign—where the wretched damsels are deflowered, eat the bread of shame, and entail misery on their wretched offspring, and disgrace and pain on their unhappy connections!—so near is the grossest immorality allied to the shedding of blood.

war is inconsistent with christianity; I have all I ask; and those who argue for it have to support an allowed indefensible scheme. But let professing christians beware how they support it, for it strikes me very forcibly, that in proportion as they give aid to that, they impede the real progress of Christ's religion; and it is matter of serious grief to observe so many declared advocates for the christian religion the advocates also for this antichristian practice: at the same time, it is with painful concern; that every friend to revealed religion observes the advocates of atheism and infidelity aiming their shafts at the person and religion of Jesus Christ; and the great argument used is, that the religion of Christ is in no wise preferable to the systems of Mahomet, of Zoroaster, of Bramha, and the various other founders of the religious sects which divide the world, as that religion leaves its professors as sanguinary as the professors of any of these. —Say they, if the religion of Christ is the religion of purity, of love and good will to men, who are its followers?—not the men who bear the name; but avoid the practice of his precepts, and instead of forgiving their enemies, take revenge, contrary to his commands, into their own hands. Christians, what will you say to this?—The charge is true, though brought by an enemy; and while you support war, the Saviour is wounded, may I not say, crucified afresh, in the house of his friends, those professed friends, who provide the strongest argu-

ment to atheists which can be brought forward, without a power, on your parts, of contradiction. You know, if you have studied the subject, that modern infidels and depreciators of the Bible, form their prominent argument on this ground, to prove its inefficacy: how then can ye, professing christians, answer the master you profess to serve, with an unblushing face, when he puts that question of trial, as real disciples, to you, "*What do ye more than others?*"

I shall now notice, and endeavour to answer, some of the most popular arguments in favour of the fighting system. It is said, that were any nation to adopt this mode, the surrounding nations of the world would beset and swallow it up. But let it be remembered, that I expect this measure only to proceed from the effects of christianity\*, and this, if real and effectual, supposes a degree, a large degree, of confidence in and dependance upon God; and were I to bring scripture, or matter of fact, to prove that such a people were never forsaken or confounded, it would be like holding a taper to the sun. Who ever trusted in him and were confounded! who ever depended on his aid, and were not delivered! who, in the exercise of obedience to his precepts, were ever forsaken? The annals of time cannot produce an instance—the annals of time can pro-

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\* Let it be remembered we are a *professing* christian nation.

duce thousands against it. Let facts speak; the man, the family, the society, the nation, who live in obedience to his commands, have God's peculiar protection; his arm is an invincible shield, and when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him: but if in the wise and inscrutable ways of his providence he permits some to suffer, to excite stronger zeal in others, and to spread truth by their sufferings, this is no argument in favour of resistance by coercion; nor should we impute their sufferings to the conquest and superiority of their enemies merely, but to a higher intention, that thousands may be won by the firmness and constancy, the patience, and exalted piety, with which they meet the terrors of their persecutors. The conquest is on their side, and they go by these very means, however evil in their intention, from an inferior to a superior enjoyment, from temporal to eternal, from earth to heaven: and in this christianity at first triumphed, not by the laws of retaliation or coercion, but by a constant, faithful adherence to the laws of Christ; and, oh! had reformers and their followers stopped there, and rather than have aimed to support the cause of piety by temporal force and the secular arm, still have given their backs to the smiters, and their cheeks to them that plucked the hair, the spirit of Christ had still been seen triumphant. But the idea of maintaining true religion, pure and undefiled religion, by pomp and splendor, by power and the sword, is like death in

the pot, is destructive of the true notion and spirit of christianity: and such false apprehensions of external glory and worldly splendor lays the ground of this error, but which the scriptures, the example of Christ himself, and the experience of good men uniformly combat. Says a good writer, "The idea of a temporal Messiah is mean and carnal: this mean idea hath possessed the minds of the professed disciples of Christ in all ages. The apostles soon struggled through such low secular notions; but a very large succession of their pretended followers have expired incurable under this disease\*."

That the existence of the church, and its success, is not owing to the sword, or dependant on it, has already been instanced in the cases of the Quakers and of the Moravians, who are living instances of the possibility of the case, even in this age of the world, and whose examples in this respect, it is much to be regretted, are so little followed.

Another argument which I have heard used, and am grieved that I do not wrong human nature in reporting it, is that, if it were not for the intervention of wars, the inhabitants of the earth would be too numerous; and to prevent a pressure which earth could not sustain, Providence ordains or permits the continuance of war to thin the ranks of life, and

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\* Claude's Essays, vol. 2, page 237, note 2,

take the superfluous out of the way; but humanity shudders at an argument like this!—It might suit a Pharaoh, a Nero, or the Empress Catharine; but only to wretches of that sanguinary cast can the argument have any weight. For an answer to this, I would only refer its advocates to their own naked bosoms, to the terrors, the consciousness, the horror, which must shortly awaken the keenest sensations of the guilt of bloodshed, and condemn them at that bar where hypocrisy shall lose its mask, and the cruel meet a full reward. The argument can have no weight with a bosom susceptible of human sensibility, much less with those who study and imitate the compassions of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Another objection is founded on the argument of natural, or civil right, and infers the justice of resistance in defence of those rights and liberties, which are by many esteemed dearer than life itself, and without which many have refused to live; to maintain which thousands have died\*.

This objection has a degree of weight, and may be tenable on the score of natural religion; it was under this case the Jews often fought, and had the divine command; and under this case also many of the gentile nations have resisted the invasions of tyrants and oppressors; and under a system of ethics

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\* England can witness this in her Hampdens, Russels, Sidneys, &c.

this may be admitted, to resist the oppressions of tyranny—this is patriotism, and is a natural affection of the human mind ; but christianity calls on us to renounce it for submission, for suffering for Christ's sake, and for the exercises of patience and endurance. If it were lawful for christians to war even on this ground, some abatement must necessarily be made to the positive commands of Christ to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, to return good for evil, and such like : commands of equal import with those which command us to love our neighbour as ourselves, or to love God supremely ; commands of equal authority as those which instituted all the ordinances of the gospel, and deserving no less regard : to what a wonderful degree of prejudice then must the minds of professing christians have risen to doubt the authority, or rob it of its effect. You see I take the liberty of differing from the general sentiments of allowed good men on this subject ; but remember I am accountable to none but God. No human tribunal dare, with justice, to interfere with the rights of conscience : and I have a hope, that if we could but exchange sentiments, I should find thousands and millions who think with me ; and although I infer nothing from multitude, yet I think the hope is not vain. The dreadful avidity with which war has been pursued of late by the French nation, by the continental allies, and the deep, affecting, and determined part which our own country has taken in it, will, I trust,

do much to make professing christians consider their ways, and think seriously of discussing the propriety of the subject, and the nature of those arguments by which it is supported, and which would not fail, in some degree, to unveil the minds of men, which have been so long and so unhappily obscured. This must be the case before obedience to Christ is much extended, or becomes universal, a blessing which we have reason to expect, and ground to pray for, from many of the promises of scripture, yet to be fulfilled. It were seriously to be wished that this might be made the subject for some academic or scholastic prize; and which, if treated in a proper manner, would not fail of making the question more popular, and the subject better understood. The miseries of war, its expence, national losses, and immoral effects, furnish matter too copious for me to urge within my present compass, nor do they immediately belong to *my* subject, but yet are worthy of much abler and more minute discussion than mine. And with a hope, and some degree of expectation, that this will shortly be the case, I am daily using that petition of my master—" *Thy kingdom come.*"

I am, dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

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